

## OTHER STATE AGENCIES INVOLVED IN WATER

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The **Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR)** in the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) “manages the State's marine and freshwater resources through programs in commercial fisheries and aquaculture; aquatic resources protection, enhancement and education; and recreational fisheries.”

The **Hawaii Commission on Water Resource Management (COWRM)**, also in DLNR, deals with water quantity issues rather than water quality issues, determining who has the right to take and/or use water from our waterbodies.

Other branches of Hawaii DOH also deal with water issues, including the **Safe Drinking Water Branch** and the **Waste Water Branch**.

## FEDERAL AGENCIES INVOLVED IN WATER

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)  
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
United States Geological Survey (USGS)  
The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Coastal Zone Management Program (CZM)



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## HAWAII'S WATER QUALITY STANDARDS:

### A PUBLIC GUIDE

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## WHAT ARE STATE WATER QUALITY STANDARDS (WQS)?

State Water Quality Standards define

- 1) the classification system for state surface waters, which assigns different protected uses to different water classes,
- 2) the specific numeric or narrative water quality criteria needed to achieve that use and
- 3) a general antidegradation policy, which maintains and protects water quality for the uses defined for a class.

## WHY DO WE HAVE WQS?

State Water Quality Standards are a requirement under the Clean Water Act, which aims to keep waters safe for plants and animals to live and people to wade, swim and fish. Water Quality Standards are the measures that States use to evaluate



the physical, chemical and biological health of their waters. In other words, we use them to understand when and where pollution

from our daily activities is polluting our waters to a point that might hurt people, plants or animals.

## WHO UPDATES WQS?

The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH), Environmental Planning Office revises Water Quality Standards every three years as a requirement of the Clean Water Act. Any amendments needed to reflect current knowledge and new federal regulations are adopted through the public hearing process.

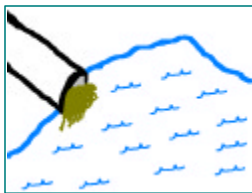
## WHAT KIND OF WATER USE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM DOES HAWAII HAVE?

The State of Hawaii classification system for water uses is extremely different from the federal system. The Hawaii “class” system, which is based on land use, was established before the federal “tiered” system, which is based on water quality.

## WHAT ARE NUMERIC AND NARRATIVE WATER QUALITY CRITERIA?

Numeric water quality criteria have specific numeric concentrations (levels of pollutants) that must be met while narrative water quality criteria are statements that must be met such as “all waters shall be free of substances attributable to domestic, industrial, or other controllable sources of pollutants.”

## HOW ARE WQS USED TO PROTECT OUR WATERS?



**Point Source Pollution** comes from an identified source, for example, a sewage pipe emptying into State

waters. The Clean Water Branch of Hawaii DOH applies two types of requirements that use Water Quality Standards to regulate point source pollution: NPDES Permits and CWA Sec. 401 Certifications.

**NPDES Permits** – The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits regulate point sources of pollution entering U.S. waters. The discharge may only be allowed if the release will not cause the waters to exceed State Water Quality Standards.

**CWA Sec. 401 Certifications** – Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certifications require applicants for federal licenses or permits to show that discharges from their facility comply with the Clean Water Act, using State Water Quality Standards as their point of reference.

**Nonpoint Source Pollution** comes from many sources that are not easily identified. When rain hits the ground and runs off into streams, storm drains or the ocean, it



carries many pollutants (fertilizers, sediment, oil and grease etc.) from places like streets,

farms, golf courses and even your backyard. Hawaii's Implementation Plan for Polluted Runoff Control uses Water Quality Standards in voluntary programs designed to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

**TMDLs** or Total Maximum Daily Loads are the total amounts of pollutants from all sources that can flow into a waterbody and still have that waterbody meet Water Quality Standards.